

NEW TRENDS IN THE GROWING AFGHAN DRUG ECONOMY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. KIRK) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. KIRK. Mr. Speaker, with the increasing number of cross-border attacks in Afghanistan that are coming from the Waziristan region of Pakistan, it is more important than ever to develop a complete picture of where al Qaeda and the Taliban terrorists are hiding and especially of how they are funded.

Last month, the Defense Department finally recognized what many of us in the Congress have been saying for years. The report states: "Narcotics-related activities are fueling the insurgency in Afghanistan and, if left unchecked, threaten the long-term stability of the country and the surrounding region." It continues: "The emerging nexus between narcotics traffickers and the insurgency is clear. Narcotics traffickers provide revenue and arms to the Taliban while the Taliban provides protection to growers and traffickers and keep the government from interfering with their activities." In short, the Taliban has become a fully functioning, South Asian narco-terrorist organization, protecting the source of 92 percent of the world's opium.

Production is so high now that the price is dropping after years of record crops. Never one to ignore market forces, Afghan drug kingpins are now expanding into new illicit markets, and they have become the major supplier of the global cannabis and hashish markets.

Now, Morocco used to be the traditional main source for hashish in the world, but that is rapidly changing. Morocco has been marginalized in favor of Afghanistan. According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Morocco used to be the source of 31 percent of the world's hashish, but by 2006, the number dwindled to just 18 percent.

In contrast, the U.N. now reports that cannabis cultivation in Afghanistan has more than doubled since 2004. In 2004, 30,000 hectares were under cultivation. In 2007, that number had risen to 70,000, much of which is protected and nurtured by the Taliban as their new source of income.

U.N. figures also show that cannabis cultivation is surging in Taliban strongholds, including in the Kandahar, Uruzgan, Paktika, Zabol, and Helmand Provinces. If the Great Plains are the breadbasket of America, then these Afghan Provinces make up the production heartland of the international narcotics trade.

The U.N. report also notes that, in these southern provinces, all of the farmers growing poppy and now cannabis pay taxes of, roughly, 10 percent of revenues to antigovernment elements, including to the Taliban and to al Qaeda. Taliban presence is highest in

the provinces with the greatest drug production, and violence follows wherever the Taliban is present.

In the heroin heartland of the Helmand Province, the bloodshed is dramatically higher than in all other Afghan provinces. Militants launch an attack every 32 hours in Helmand, compared to just one attack every 3 or 4 days in the rest of the country or just one attack a week in Kabul.

The shift demonstrates that it's time for the United States and for our NATO allies to take a stronger stand against the narcotics trade of Afghanistan. Even the Defense Department now acknowledges a clear link between drug trafficking and terrorist financing, a concept that used to be very controversial in Afghanistan, but that is now clear.

Of course, in Colombia, we learned that drugs and terrorism must be fought simultaneously. In Afghanistan and Pakistan, we must take the lessons learned in Colombia to understand that counterterrorism programs will not work unless there is also an effective counternarcotics program to eliminate the Taliban's source of money.

Mr. Speaker, while partisan feelings in the House surround the mission in Iraq, the challenges of the Afghan mission are overshadowed. The Afghan war is sometimes described as the "good war" or as the "bipartisan war" or as the "war that our allies support." It is certainly true that our forces in Afghanistan enjoy stronger support from the American people and from our allies overseas. While we have a NATO command in Afghanistan, our strong allied support for this mission should not blind us to the growing problems and dangers emerging for our troops.

The reality is this: Heroin has financed the resurgence of al Qaeda and the Taliban, and they have now found a new source of money—hashish and cannabis—which provide, in our estimate, hundreds of millions of dollars to finance terror. The lessons of FARC's decline in Colombia are clear: To wipe out terror, you have to attack its income. In both Colombia and Afghanistan, that income comes from narcotics.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. SKELTON addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. POE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DEFAZIO addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. CALVERT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. CALVERT addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. MCHENRY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. MCHENRY addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. FLAKE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. FLAKE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. MORAN of Kansas addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. GARRETT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

ENERGY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BARTON) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. BARTON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

We are going to do something a little bit differently this evening on the House floor. We have a 1-hour Special Order of the minority and a 1-hour Special Order of the majority. The minority leader and the Speaker have agreed to combine those two Special Orders so that both sides can participate in the debate about energy policy. I will be leading the minority side, and the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr.